

DOCUMENT RESUME

ED 305 557

CG 021 568

AUTHOR Hamon, Raeann R.
TITLE Filial Responsibility Expectations among Adult Child-Older Parent Pairs.
PUB DATE Nov 88
NOTE 35p.; Paper presented at the Annual Meeting of the Gerontological Society (41st, San Francisco, CA, November 18-22, 1988).
PUB TYPE Reports - Research/Technical (143) -- Speeches/Conference Papers (150)

EDRS PRICE MF01/PC02 Plus Postage.
DESCRIPTORS *Adult Children; Congruence (Psychology); Expectation; Helping Relationship; *Older Adults; *Parent Attitudes; *Parent Child Relationship; Proximity; *Social Support Groups
IDENTIFIERS *Family Responsibility; *Filial Responsibility

ABSTRACT

As the American population continues to age, more and more adult children and their elderly parents are examining their beliefs about what constitutes appropriate filial behavior. This study was conducted to investigate filial responsibility expectations endorsed by a randomly selected sample of 144 elder parent-adult child pairs from the Harrisburg area of Pennsylvania. Descriptive statistics suggest that most older parents and adult children interpreted the filial role to include a great deal of emotional support and discussion of important matters and available resources. Both generations perceived living close and writing letters to parents on a weekly basis as less important. Parents were more likely to disapprove of receiving financial assistance from children, living with children, and having children adjust their work schedules to help them than were their offspring. Robinson's statistical measure of agreement, which examined the amount of consensus between generations, revealed that there was a moderate level of agreement between parents and their children on filial responsibility expectations. Multiple regression analyses indicated that amount of agreement on filial norms did not have an impact on parental well-being. (Author/NB)

* Reproductions supplied by EDRS are the best that can be made *
* from the original document. *

ED305557

CG 021568

Filial Responsibility

1

Filial Responsibility Expectations Among

Adult Child - Older Parent Pairs

Raeann R. Hamon

Messiah College

U.S. DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION
Office of Educational Research and Improvement
EDUCATIONAL RESOURCES INFORMATION
CENTER (ERIC)

- ☒ This document has been reproduced as
received from the person or organization
originating it.
☐ Minor changes have been made to improve
reproduction quality.

- Points of view or opinions stated in this docu-
ment do not necessarily represent official
OERI position or policy.

"PERMISSION TO REPRODUCE THIS
MATERIAL HAS BEEN GRANTED BY

Raeann R. Hamon

TO THE EDUCATIONAL RESOURCES
INFORMATION CENTER (ERIC)."

Presented at the 41st Annual Meeting of The Gerontological
Society of America, San Francisco, CA, November 1988.

Abstract

As the American population continues to age, more and more adult children and their elderly parents are examining their beliefs about what constitutes appropriate filial behavior. The current study is an investigation of filial responsibility expectations endorsed by a randomly selected sample of 144 elderly parent - adult child pairs from the Harrisburg area of Pennsylvania. Descriptive statistics suggested that most older parents and adult children interpreted the filial role to include a great deal of emotional support and discussion of important matters and available resources. Both generations perceived living close and writing letters to parents on a weekly basis as less important. Parents were more likely to disapprove of receiving financial assistance from children, living with children, and having children adjust their work schedules to help them than were their offspring. Robinson's statistical measure of agreement, which examined the amount of consensus between generations, revealed that there was a moderate level of agreement between parents and their children on filial responsibility expectations. Multiple regression analyses indicated that amount of agreement on filial norms did not have an impact on parental well-being, however.

As the elderly segment of the population grows in both number and proportion, more and more adult children are experiencing the obligations and privileges of filial duties, making this aspect of the intergenerational relationship of great concern to today's families. Despite the increasing normativity of relationships with older and older family members, a great deal of ambiguity surrounds intergenerational roles. What types of attitudes and behaviors can aging parents rightfully expect of their adult children? Similarly, with various competing demands (employment outside the home, dependent children, limited resources of time, energy and money, and so on) and increasing intervention by governmental programs (Medicare, Meals on Wheels, Senior Centers, and others) what should adult children expect of themselves with regard to their roles as responsible offspring? Do parents and children agree as to what the filial role entails? And finally, does the amount of consensus between the generations' expectations influence the personal well-being of older parents? These are questions addressed in the present investigation.

Theoretical Background

Role theory and symbolic interaction provide the theoretical foundation for this study. According to symbolic interactionists, if one wants to understand social and human behavior, the most fruitful area to study is beliefs and values that individuals acquire from interacting with others. Cognitions and other mentalistic

processes offer the most direct explanations of interactive behavior (Burr, Leigh, Day & Constantine, 1979).

Roles are comprised of a collection of social norms — beliefs about how people ought to behave in a certain position. Although role definition permits a great deal of individual discretion for the role player, roles always consist of some socially shared expectations (Burr, Leigh, Day, & Constantine, 1979). Role expectations, or sets of cognitions and beliefs that serve as a description of appropriate conduct for individuals who occupy specific social positions, were the focus of this study. These beliefs dictate the rights and privileges, as well as the duties and obligations of the social position of adult child in relation to persons occupying the complementary position in the social system, namely parent. Not only do expectations outline which acts the filial role occupants are and are not to perform, but they also dictate "how" persons "should" conduct themselves in this position. Expectations also include time and spatial dimensions so that people expect filial role behavior to occur at the proper time and in the appropriate place (Sarbin, 1968; Sarbin & Allen, 1968).

Roles, then, do not exist in a vacuum; they involve a dynamic interface of expectations of two or more individuals. In the case of the filial role, the expectations of parents and their adult children seem to be preeminent. Consequently, in this study I used older parent - adult child dyads as the unit of analysis since the views of

both role partners are necessary to adequately investigate the filial role.

When measuring both generations on a singular subject -- filial responsibility norms -- the possibility exists that the expectations of the two generations will not be congruent. Thus, amount of consensus on role expectations, or how much the parents and their children agree or disagree on role expectations, is also important. When people agree on what they expect of the role performer, consensus exists. The amount of expectation consensus within the dyads has implications for the satisfaction pairs receive from specific relationship interactions and for individual well-being, as well. Thus, in this investigation I also examined the effect of filial expectation consensus or dissensus on the well-being of older parents.

Previous Literature

A few researchers have examined filial responsibility expectations held by elderly parents and/or adult children. In general, this research has been diverse in its focus, method, and intent. In addition, most investigators have used a small and limited number of filial expectation items.

Some researchers have considered what elderly parents expect of their adult offspring. Streib (1965) found that a sample of 291 retired parents placed greatest emphasis on the maintenance of close affectional ties with their adult children. More recently, qualitative and quantitative data from a small sample of 23 older

adults revealed that parents desire affection, thoughtfulness, and open, honest, and frequent communication from their adult offspring; they deemed direct caregiving and residential proximity less important (Blieszner & Mancini, 1987).

In analyses of data from 595 low-income elderly parents in Philadelphia, Seelbach (1977, 1978, & 1981) and his associates (Hanson, Sauer, & Seelbach, 1983; Seelbach & Sauer, 1977) examined filial responsibility expectations and realizations, variables associated with different levels of expectations, and predictors of types of assistance provided by adult children. Results suggested gender differences; females were more likely than males to think that old parents who do not wish to live alone or who are physically unable to care for themselves should live with one of their children (Seelbach, 1977). Statistically significant differences between blacks and whites were nonexistent (Seelbach, 1981). Older, widowed, low-income, and frail persons tended to expect more from their offspring; Seelbach (1978) noted that filial expectancies of old parents are usually indicative of their level of need. When comparing expectations with actual assistance received, parents who were female, widowed, had low-income, and were in poor health were likely to be profiting from filial responsibility realizations (Seelbach, 1978).

Research on the impact of rural or urban environments on filial responsibility expectations of single cohort groups has yielded contradictory results. Dinkel (1944) found that younger rural

residents were more likely to endorse filial obligation norms than their urban student counterparts. Conversely, a study by Sauer, Seelbach, and Hanson (1981) indicated that urbanites were significantly more likely to endorse filial norms. Among a sample of Caucasian students and their parents, Wake and Sporakowski (1972) found minimal and nonsignificant differences in filial attitudes between urban and rural residents.

Studies have indicated that aged parents have differing expectations of family and nonfamily members. Mancini and Simon (1984) compared the expectations of support from family, close friends and casual friends in the areas of assistance, social integration, and intimacy. Findings from their sample of 91 elderly participants indicated that expectations for support from family members exceeded those for friends, especially casual friends, particularly in the area of assistance. Expectations of family were greater in the way of lending small and large amounts of money in an emergency, giving unsolicited advice, intervening when personal safety is at risk, and providing housing when circumstances demand it. Similarly, Sanders and Seelbach (1981) analyzed age differences in preferences for family versus nonfamily sources of care for the old with telephone interview data from 450 individuals ranging from 18 to 90 years old. Although there were no significant differences in average ages of participants preferring family sources and nonfamily sources, there was a greater preference for family care among whites than blacks.

Brody (1981) and her colleagues (Brody, Johnsen, & Fulcomer, 1984; Brody, Johnsen, Fulcomer, & Lang, 1983) are responsible for one of the sparse number of studies that analyzed the attitudes and beliefs of more than one generation simultaneously. Using a sample of 433 women from three generations (225 of whom belonged to 75 family triads), they investigated opinions about appropriate filial responsibility behaviors, and personal preferences among types of providers of different types of services. Overall, the sense of filial responsibility was strong among the three generations of women; most felt that the old should be able to depend on adult children for help (Brody, 1981; Brody et al., 1983). The majority of these women believed that adult children should adjust their family schedules and help meet expenses of professional health care for the impaired elderly mother when needed. They did not view adjustment of work schedules and sharing households as appropriate, however. All three generations ranked the adult child first over five other potential providers (other relative, friend/neighbor, volunteer/civic or church group, pension/insurance, and government) for intimate functions such as confidant and financial manager (Brody et al., 1984). There were generational differences, however. The middle generation women were less likely than grandmothers or granddaughters to prefer adult children as providers of housework, personal care, and financial support (Brody, 1981). The oldest generation was most receptive to formal services for the elderly (Brody et al., 1983).

Existing research also indicates that parental expectations of filial responsibility may affect older parents' levels of well-being. Filial responsibility expectations are inversely associated with parental morale (Quinn, 1983; Seelbach & Sauer, 1977); the more parents expected from their children in the way of obligations surrounding care during illness, financial help, living nearby, visiting patterns and general feeling of duty, the lower was their life satisfaction. Seelbach and Sauer (1977) proposed that those parents with extensive expectations may be "out of tune with their offsprings' expectations" (p. 498). Similarly, in a study of 50 elderly parent-adult child dyads, parental well-being was associated with parental perceptions that their children will fulfill their roles as responsible others if crisis necessitates them to do so (Schlesinger, Tobin, & Kulys, 1981).

In light of the available research findings, I considered the individual expectations of parents and their adult children in this study. I hypothesized that both aged parents and their adult children endorse filial responsibility items that are of an emotional nature (talk over matters of personal importance, be together on special occasions, give emotional support, and so on) to a greater extent than those items that are instrumental (provide financial support, adjust family and work schedules to help, and so on) in their focus. This portion of the study replicated previous research. The current investigation also extended available knowledge by computing levels of consensus between the generations and then

determining whether degree of consensus had an impact on the well-being of older parents. I hypothesized that parental morale or sense of well-being is directly and positively related to extent of consensus (agreement) between generational filial responsibility expectations.

Methods

Respondents

One hundred forty-four elderly parent and adult child pairs from the Harrisburg area of Pennsylvania were participants in this study. I collected data during the Fall of 1986 using a two-stage probability design as described by Dillman (1978). First, using a systematic random sample of the Harrisburg telephone directory, I screened households for parents who were 65 years of age or older. If no residents were parents in their advanced years, I asked persons 21 years or older with aged parents to participate. In either case, when more than one resident was eligible for inclusion, I used a table of random numbers to select the study participant. Questioning continued with the appropriate persons, when possible, to verify their address and to elicit the names and addresses of their randomly selected pair partners. The telephone screening yielded an initial pool of 53% of total households contacted (439 unuseables, 185 refusals--including hang-ups, and 209 acceptances).

The second phase of the sampling design involved mailing separate questionnaires to each member of the pair. I typed names of the referent parent or child on the corresponding personalized cover

letter in order to remind the participant which parent/child he or she was to consider in responding to the questions. A total of 328 individuals completed the questionnaire, representing a return rate of 78% after three follow-up contacts. Because the purpose of this study was to examine the level of agreement between parents and children on filial responsibility expectations, I examined only the data of 144 completed pairs (87.8% of the respondents) for the present report.

Older parents ranged in age from 60 to 94 years, with a mean of 71 years. There were more women (58.7%) than men (41.3%), and more married parents (65.5%) than widowed (31.7%) and divorced (2.8%). The majority of the sample was white (97.2%), with the remaining portion being black (2.1%) and Native American (.7%). Due to the preponderance of white participants, I cannot generalize findings to non-white populations. In the sample, 23.1% had annual incomes of less than \$10,000, 31.5% had gross incomes of \$10,000 to \$19,999, 17.7% grossed between \$20,000 and \$29,999, and the remaining 27.7% made \$30,000 or more. Although the number of living children ranged from one to ten, the average number of living offspring for this sample of older parents was 3.28. With the exception of the racial distribution, the older parents of this sample were comparable to the older segment of the Harrisburg area.

Adult children were 23 to 66 years of age, with an average age of 41 years. Thirty four percent were male and 66% were female. The

largest portion of children were first-borns (41%), with 33% second-borns, 11.8% third-borns, 5.6% fourth-borns and 8.3% beyond that. Like their parents, most (76.4%) of the children were married with fewer being widowed (3.5%) than divorced or separated (9.7%), and 10.4% never marrying at all. Gross family income tended to be higher for the children than for the parents. Only 4.4% had annual incomes of less than \$10,000, 10.3% had \$10,000 to \$19,999, 21.3% earned \$20,000 to \$29,000, and 63.9% grossed \$30,000 or above. Adult children had an average of 1.88 offspring, with an average of 1.27 of them dependent. Although comparable in most other areas, the sample of adult children had a slightly higher ratio of females to males than is found in the greater Harrisburg area.

Measurement

Dillman's (1978) specifications guided the construction of the survey instruments. Questionnaires for both the parents and the children included items to ascertain their filial responsibility expectations -- their beliefs about what obligations adult offspring have with regard to meeting the needs of aging parents. I adapted items from previous research (Brody, Johnsen, Fulcomer & Lang, 1983; Seelbach & Sauer, 1977; Quinn, 1983) to create the 16-item Hamon Filial Responsibility Scale for this study. I expanded upon existing filial responsibility scales in order to include items that tapped emotive, instrumental, contact, and communicative components of filial responsibility. Items included in the scale explore attitudes towards what people typically think of as filial responsibility, such

as helping when sick, visiting or writing once a week, and giving emotional support. In addition, I included items that address many of the current issues of contemporary society. For example, with more women -- the traditional caregivers -- in the work force, it was important to learn whether filial responsibility expectations encompass children adjusting their work schedules to help. So too, in the context of a nation whose families are greatly mobile, it was significant to know whether filial responsibility expectations include family members being together on special occasions. Finally, in an industrialized country that offers governmental assistance to the aged, one might suspect that filial responsibility entails helping parents to understand governmental resources that are available to them. Thus, I designed the Hamon Filial Responsibility Scale to take current trends into account, as they might affect the parent-child relationship, particularly with regard to filial responsibility expectations and norms. The Hamon Filial Responsibility Scale items appear in the appendix.

Participants responded to each item using a 4-point Likert scale that ranged from (4) strongly agree to (1) strongly disagree, with a possible scale score of 16 to 64. Means of the items ranged from 2.29 to 3.49 for children and 2.18 to 3.42 for older parents. Internal consistency (Cronbach's alpha) of the Hamon Filial Responsibility Scale was .86 for the parent sample and .85 for the sample of adult children.

The measure of the aging parents' psychological well-being was the revised version of the Philadelphia Geriatric Center Morale Scale (Lawton, 1975). This 17-item scale required dichotomous responses from participants and assessed three dimensions of morale: Agitation, Attitude Toward Own Aging, and Lonely Dissatisfaction. Information about the scale's development, validity and reliability is available in Lawton (1972, 1975). The Cronbach's alpha of this scale for the present sample of older parents was .84.

Results

Individual Expectations

Descriptive statistics provided a general picture of the expectations of the two generations. Table 1 depicts the endorsement by both parents and children for each of the sixteen items. It also provides information about significant generational differences in the proportion of endorsement as revealed by the Fisher's Exact test statistic. Among the adult children, the three most strongly endorsed norms suggest that grown offspring interpret the filial role as one that includes a great deal of emotional support, and discussion of important matters and available resources. The next most popular grouping of items reveals that adult children perceive of their role as inclusive of the provision of instrumental support. They believed that responsible children would or should sacrifice personal freedom, adjust their family schedules, provide financial assistance, and open their home to their parents if the need should arise. In contrast, the majority of adult children disagreed or

strongly disagreed with two items. Adult children thought it was inappropriate to ask them as responsible offspring to write to their parents once a week or to live close to their parents. The sample of adult children was almost equally divided on the belief that children who live nearby after they grow up should visit their parents at least once a week; 51.3% either agreed or strongly agreed with that statement.

Insert Table 1 about here

In general, the percentages of endorsement among the elderly parent subgroup were not as high as those among their adult children. (See Table 1 for information about significant generational differences in the proportion of endorsement as revealed by Fisher's Exact Test statistic). Older parents endorsed with highest frequency the same three items that topped the list for adult children; the role of the child as a confidant is reconfirmed as parents, too, thought children should talk to them about important issues in their lives. Also of value to parents is that their children be with them on special occasions. Many indicated that they thought it appropriate that children sacrifice some personal freedom to take care of them if they need it, suggesting a desire to feel secure in knowing that their needs would be met should they become incapable of independence. Like their adult children, most elderly parents thought it unnecessary for children to live close to their parents or

write to their parents at least once a week. Unlike their offspring, however, parents disapproved of receiving financial assistance from children, living with their children, and having children adjust their work schedules to help them.

Intergenerational Consensus

In an effort to examine the amount of consensus between the generations, I submitted parent and child responses to Robinson's (1957) statistical measure of agreement. Unlike measures of correlation which require only that paired values be linked by a linear relationship, agreement requires that paired values be identical (Robinson, 1957, p. 19). For example, perfect correlation occurs if the second element of the pair (y) is always equal to a multiple (a) of the first element of the pair (x) plus a constant (b) ($y=ax+b$). The multiple and constant must be the same for all pairs. In contrast, perfect agreement can only occur if the second element (y) is always equal to the first element ($y=x$). Thus, perfect agreement implies perfect correlation, but not vice versa. The agreement coefficient ranges from 0, which indicates perfect disagreement, to 1, which suggests perfect agreement. For example, if Parent A strongly agreed that "adult children should give their parents financial help," but his/her Child A strongly disagreed with that statement, there would be perfect disagreement. On the other hand, if both Parent B and Child B strongly disagreed with the norm, there would be perfect agreement. Table 2 displays the agreement

coefficients for the sixteen individual items, as well as a total response measure.

Insert Table 2 about here

Across the 130 pairs having complete data for all sixteen items, Robinson's measure of agreement was .5819; parents and their adult children were in moderate agreement with regard to filial norms. Individual items with high amounts of agreement related to residential proximity of children to parents, giving parents advice, and appropriate types and frequency of contact. The greatest divergence of agreement was evidenced in the areas of emotional and financial assistance to parents.

Parental Morale

In order to identify variables that would be helpful in explaining differences in morale scores among older parents, I conducted exploratory analyses in the form of stepwise multiple regression. Among the variables considered were two measures of parent-child agreement. Each measure assigned a value to each parent-child pair. The first measure involved a comparison of the parent and child responses on each of the 16 items. These comparisons were summarized by calculating Robinson's measure of agreement across all 16 items. The second value was a measure of agreement of the parent's and child's total (for the 16 items) scores. The two agreement measures were unimportant in explaining

morale differences among elderly parents. Thus, the data did not support the major research hypothesis that consensus (agreement) between generational filial responsibility expectations is positively related to parental morale. Consequently, the final regression model did not include either of the agreement measures. (Refer to Table 3 for variables included in the regression model).

Insert Table 3 about here

The overall regression model accounted for 40.5% of the variability in parental morale. Two interaction effects, religious preference with self-perceived health ($p=.04$) and perceived adequacy of income with perceived health ($p=.03$) were statistically significant. I used a multiple comparison procedure (pairwise t -tests) to isolate specific differences for each case of significant interaction. With regard to the interaction between religious preference and parental health, both Protestants ($p<.01$) and Catholics ($p=.08$) reporting good health had higher average morale scores than those reporting poor health ($p=.12$). However, for those with other religious preferences, the trend was reversed ($p=.12$). See Table 4 for the set of means that depicts the interaction of religious preference and health.

Insert Table 4 about here

When considering the interaction between parental perception of income adequacy and parental perception of health, the average morale score was higher among those with adequate income and good health ($p=.14$) (See Table 5). For those with inadequate income, the trend was reversed; with inadequate income average morale scores were higher for elderly parents reporting poor, rather than good health. Said differently, those reporting good health and adequate income had higher average morale scores than those with good health and inadequate income ($p=.076$). Conversely, parents reporting poor health averaged higher morale scores if they had inadequate incomes ($p=.43$).

Insert Table 5 about here

Discussion

As hypothesized, this study reconfirmed the strength of filial responsibility norms in American society; both parents and adult children recognize certain filial obligations to be fulfilled by adult offspring. Also as expected, the adult child's significance in the emotional realm emerged as predominant for both children and parents, supporting the evidence accumulated by several other researchers (Blieszner & Mancini, 1987; Brody et. al, 1984; Streib,

1965). Instrumental assistance appears to be less important among this sample as well, supporting Seelbach's (1984) assertion that the primary role of today's American family serves best as a major source of affectional and emotional support.

The amount of endorsement of the filial responsibility items seems to be responsive to current trends in the American family. For one, although the desire for independence appears to be the norm for older parents, as evidenced in the low levels of endorsement for financial support, adjustments to family and work schedules, and the like, the data do support Schlesinger and colleagues' (1981) contention that there is security in knowing that one's child will respond when needed. The majority of both parents and children endorsed the item stating that children should feel responsible for their parents. Second, parents and children seem to have made adjustments to greater mobility among family members. Although both generations highly endorsed being together on special occasions, they deemed living close and writing and visiting once a week as less important. Third, like Sussman (1976), in this research I argue that with increasing governmental intervention, the nature of filial responsibility has changed. In an increasingly complex society, the adult child becomes an important source of affectional and emotional support and advice, and is particularly instrumental in helping parents learn of and utilize governmental resources that will prolong independent living. An additional filial norm that the current study did not measure, which appears to be important in today's society, is

the adult child as coordinator and monitor of services and care to aging parents (Cicirelli, 1981). Future studies should examine the adult child's role as coordinator of services. Finally, the difference with which parents and children endorsed the filial responsibility items might explain the existence of filial anxiety — "the state of worry or concern about the anticipated decline and death of an aging parent and one's abilities to meet anticipated caregiving needs" (Cicirelli, 1987, p. 5). In general, the percentage of endorsement of the items was greater for adult children than for their aged parents. Children may experience some undue anxiety, to the extent that their parents do not seem to expect as much from them as they do of themselves.

From a role theory perspective, one might not be surprised to discover at least a moderate level of agreement between the generations with regard to expected behavior and attitudes for adult offspring. Through the interaction process, adult children are likely to have modified their conception of the filial role in response to the feedback they have received from their parents and other reference persons. Since role-making is a dynamic process, family practitioners could greatly assist the family of later life by facilitating intergenerational communication, particularly with regard to filial expectations. More practical strategies for encouraging honest discussions concerning appropriate filial behavior might reduce filial anxiety and help older parents realistically plan for future events. These strategies should promote direct

communication of needs and desires to reduce the likelihood of misinterpretation and disappointment.

Finally, in explaining morale differences among aging parents, degree of intergenerational consensus on filial expectations appears irrelevant. Although parents' own expectations of filial responsibility may affect their level of morale (Quinn, 1983; Seelbach & Sauer, 1977), consensus between the generations with regard to filial norms appears to be less crucial. Instead, what again emerges in explaining parental well-being has to do with their living situation (Larson, 1978), particularly perceptions of their situation in comparison to others' life circumstances. The interactive effects of health with religious preference and health with income adequacy suggest that although health is important in understanding morale, it can be modified by intervening variables.

In conclusion, this study has made several important contributions to the literature on intergenerational relationships in later life. First, it has replicated and, in most instances, reconfirmed existing data that describe the nature of the filial role in light of social changes. Second, this study has expanded the list of filial expectation items to include a multiplicity of potential role norms for adult offspring in an effort to get a more comprehensive and timely conception of this role. Third, the analysis utilized a measure of agreement in order to go beyond comparisons of frequencies of endorsement of various filial expectations in understanding generational differences and

similarities. Finally, the study examined level of agreement in an effort to determine impact of intergenerational consensus on parental morale.

References

- Blieszner, R., & Mancini, J.A. (1987). Enduring ties: Older Adults' parental role and responsibilities. Family Relations, 36, 176-180.
- Brody, E.M. (1981). "Women in the middle" and family help to older people. The Gerontologist, 2, 471-480.
- Brody, E.M., Johnsen, P.T., & Fulcomer, M.C. (1984). What should adult children do for elderly parents? Opinions and preferences of three generations of women. Journal of Gerontology, 39, 736-746.
- Brody, E.M., Johnsen, P.T., Fulcomer, M.C., & Lang, A.M. (1983). Women's changing roles and help to elderly parents: Attitudes of three generations of women. Journal of Gerontology, 38, 597-607.
- Burr, W.R., Leigh, G.K., Day, R.D., & Constantine, J. (1979). Symbolic interaction and the family. In W.R. Burr, R. Hill, F.I. Nye, and I.L. Reiss (Eds.), Contemporary theories about the family: Vol. 2 (pp. 42-111). New York: Free.
- Cicirelli, V.G. (1981). Helping elderly parents: The role of adult children. Boston: Auburn House.
- Cicirelli, V.G. (1987). Filial anxiety in relation to care of elderly parents. Paper presented at the 40th Annual Scientific Meeting of the Gerontological Society of America, Washington, DC, November.

- Dillman, D.A. (1978). Mail and telephone surveys: The total design method. New York: John Wiley & Sons.
- Dinkel, R. (1944). Attitudes of children toward supporting aged parents. American Sociological Review, 9, 370-379.
- Hanson, S.L., Sauer, W.J., & Seelbach, W.C. (1983). Racial and cohort variations in filial responsibility norms. The Gerontologist, 23, 626-631.
- Larson, R. (1978). Thirty years of research on the subjective well-being of older Americans. Journal of Gerontology, 33, 109-125.
- Lawton, M.P. (1975). The Philadelphia Geriatric Center Morale Scale: A revision. Journal of Gerontology, 30, 85-89.
- Lawton, M.P. (1972). The dimension of morale. In D.P. Kent, R. Kastenbaum, and S. Sherwood (Eds.), Research planning and action for the elderly (pp. 144-165). New York: Behavioral Sciences.
- Mancini, J.A., & Simon, J. (1984). Older adults' expectations of support from family and friends. Journal of Applied Gerontology, 3, 150-160.
- Quinn, W. (1983). Personal and family adjustment in later life. Journal of Marriage and the Family, 45, 57-73.
- Robinson, W.S. (1957). The statistical measure of agreement. American Sociological Review, 22, 586-593.
- Sanders, L.T., & Seelbach, W.C. (1981). Variations in preferred care alternatives for the elderly: Family versus nonfamily sources. Family Relations, 30, 447-451.

- Sarbin, T.R. (1968). Role: Psychological aspects. In D.L. Sills (Ed.), International Encyclopedia of the Social Sciences (Vol. 13) (pp. 546-552). New York: Macmillan, Free.
- Sarbin, T.R., & Allen, V.L. (1968). Role theory. In G. Linzey & E. Aronson (Eds.), Handbook of social psychology: Vol. 1 (2nd ed.) (pp. 488-567). Reading, MA: Addison-Wesley.
- Sauer, W., Seelbach, W., & Hanson, S. (1981). Rural-urban and cohort differences in filial responsibility norms. Journal of Minority Aging, 5, 299-305.
- Schlesinger, M.R., Tobin, S.S., Kulys, R. (1981). The responsible child and parental well-being. Journal of Gerontological Social Work, 3, 3-16.
- Seelbach, W.C. (1977). Gender differences in expectations for filial responsibility. The Gerontologist, 17, 421-425.
- Seelbach, W.C. (1978). Correlates of aged parents' filial responsibility expectations and realizations. The Family Coordinator, 27, 341-350.
- Seelbach, W.C. (1981). Filial responsibility among aged parents: A racial comparison. Journal of Minority Aging, 5, 286-292.
- Seelbach, W.C., & Sauer, W. (1977). Filial responsibility expectations and morale among aged parents. The Gerontologist, 17, 492-499.
- Streib, G. (1965). Intergenerational relations: Perspectives of the two generations on the older parent. Journal of Marriage and the Family, 27, 469-476.

- Sussman, M. (1976). The family life of old people. In R. Binstock and E. Shanas (Eds.). Handbook of aging and the social sciences (pp. 415-449) New York: Van Nostrand Reinhold.
- Wake, S., & Sporakowski, M. (1972). An intergenerational comparison of attitudes towards supporting aged parents. Journal of Marriage and the Family, 34, 42-48.

Appendix

Hamon Filial Responsibility Scale

-
1. Married children should live close to parents.
 2. Adult children should take care of their parents in whatever way necessary when they are sick.
 3. Adult children should give their parents financial help.
 4. If children live nearby after they grow up, they should visit their parents at least once a week.
 5. Children who live at a distance, more than twenty miles away, should write to their parents at least once a week.
 6. Adult children should feel responsible for their older parents.
 7. Older parents and adult children should be together on special occasions, such as holidays, birthdays, and anniversaries.
 8. Older parents should be able to talk over matters of personal importance, that is those that deeply affect their lives, with their adult children.
 9. Adult children should give their parents emotional support.
 10. Adult children should be willing to sacrifice some of their personal freedom to take care of aging parents if they need it.
 11. Adult children should make room for their older parents in their home in an emergency.
 12. Adult children should give older parents advice when they need it.

13. Adult children should adjust their work schedule in order to help older parents when they need it.
14. When older parents are unable to care for themselves, they should be able to live with one of their adult children.
15. Adult children should adjust their family schedule in order to help older parents when they need it.
16. Adult children should help their parents understand and use resources/services (Medicare, Meals on Wheels, and so on) that they are entitled to, when they need it.

Note. Response choices range from 4 = strongly agree to 1 = strongly disagree.

Table 1

Endorsement of Hamon Filial Responsibility Scale Items By Adult
Children and Their Parents

Item	Children			Parents		
	Freq/N	%	Rank	Freq/N	%	Rank
Help understand resources	142/143	99.3	1	139/143	97.2	2
Give emotional support	140/144	97.2	2	135/141	95.7	3
Talk over matters of import.	139/144	96.5	3	142/144	98.6	1
Make room in home in emerg. ^a	136/144	94.4	4	103/141	73.0	7
Sacrifice personal freedom ^a	134/143	93.7	5	115/142	81.0	6
Care when sick ^a	133/144	92.4	6	92/143	64.3	9
Be together on spec. occas.	123/143	86.0	7	124/143	86.7	5
Give financial help ^a	121/143	84.6	8	58/141	41.1	13
Give parents advice	121/144	84.0	9	126/142	88.7	4
Adjust fam schedule to help ^a	116/144	80.6	10	81/141	57.4	10
Feel responsible for parent ^b	111/142	78.2	11	95/143	66.4	8
Adjust work schedule to help ^a	91/144	63.2	12	59/140	42.1	12
Parent should live w child ^a	87/143	60.8	13	51/139	36.7	15
Visit once a week	74/144	51.4	14	79/142	55.6	11
Live close to parent	46/143	32.2	15	37/144	25.7	16
Write once a week	44/143	30.8	16	56/142	39.4	14

Note. Ranking reflects percent of respondents who "strongly agreed" or "agreed" with each item.

Fisher's Exact Test indicated significant differences in proportion of endorsement for children and parents at $p < .001^a$ or $p < .05^b$.

Table 2

Coefficient of Agreement for Aged Parent - Adult Child Pairs on the
Hamon Filial Responsibility Scale

Item	Measure of Agreement
Children should live close	.6294
Parent should be able to live with child	.6173
Should give parents advice when necessary	.6033
Children should write once a week	.5999
Children should visit once a week	.5987
Should be together on special occasions	.5904
Should adjust work schedule to help parent	.5389
Able to talk over matters of personal import	.5357
Children should feel responsible for parent	.5153
Children should care for parent when sick	.4901
Should make room in home in emergency	.4900
Should sacrifice personal freedom to care	.4877
Help parents understand and use resources	.4860
Should adjust family schedule to help parent	.4732
Children should give emotional support	.4610
Children should give financial help	.3618
Total	.5819

Note. N=130; Pairs with missing data in the HFR scale were deleted for this statistic's computation.

Table 3

Summary of Multiple Regression Analysis For Parental Morale

Independent Variables	Type	F value	p
Parent's marital status	categorical	1.01	.37
Parent's religious preference	categorical	.69	.50
Parent's income adequacy	categorical	.19	.66
Parent's perceived health	categorical	.01	.92
Religious preference x income adeq. cat. x cat.		1.73	.18
Religious preference x health	cat. x cat.	3.33	.04*
Income adequacy x health	cat. x cat.	4.92	.03*
$R^2 = .405$			

Note. N=119; cases with missing data for variables included in regression model were excluded from this analysis.

Table 4

Average Morale Scores for Aged Parents by Religious Preference and
Level of Health

Religious Preference	Health	
	Good	Poor
Protestant	30.63	27.61
Catholic	30.02	27.84
Other	28.32	33.15

Note. N=119; cases with missing data were excluded from this analysis. Possible scores on morale scale ranged from 17 to 34.

Table 5

Average Morale Scores for Aged Parents by Adequacy of Income and
Level of Health

Adequacy of Income	Health	
	Good	Poor
Yes	30.68	28.98
No	28.63	30.09

Note. N=119; cases with missing data were excluded from this analysis. Possible scores on morale scale ranged from 17 to 34.